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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30), in which the Council requested me to submit reports at least every four months on the situation in Somalia and the efforts to promote the peace process, including updates on the scope and contingency planning for launching a peace-building mission for Somalia.

2. The report covers developments since my previous report, dated 10 June 2003 (S/2003/636). Its main focus is the progress made and the challenges faced by the Somali national reconciliation process at Mbagathi, Kenya, as well as the support given to it by the international community, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its Kenyan chairmanship. The report also provides an update on the political and security situation in Somalia and the humanitarian and development activities of United Nations programmes and agencies.

II. Somali national reconciliation process

3. By mid-June 2003, the plenary of the Somalia National Reconciliation Conference had endorsed the reports prepared by five of the six reconciliation committees, namely, those on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; land and property rights; economic recovery, institution-building and resource mobilization; regional and international relations; and conflict resolution and reconciliation.

4. Disagreements in the committee on federalism and a provisional charter prevented it from concluding its report. The major points of disagreement centred on the length of the transitional period, the members of Parliament and the modality for their selection, the timing of the establishment of a federal system of government and the status of the existing regional and local authorities, in particular, "Somaliland".

5. On 1 July, President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya announced the appointment of Mohammed Abdi Affey, a former Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Kenya's Ambassador to Somalia. Mr. Affey is assisting Bethuel Kiplagat, the Kenyan Special

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Envoy for Somalia and Chairman of the Conference. He will work from Nairobi until it is possible to move to Mogadishu.

6. On 5 July, after three weeks of intense negotiations, the Somali Leaders Committee at the Conference reached an accord that was expected to be part of the draft charter. It was agreed that a federal system of government, to be called the transitional federal government, would be formed in Somalia during a four-year transitional period. The process of federalism would develop gradually and be completed within the first two and a half years of transition. The Parliament would comprise 351 members, 12 per cent of whom would be women. The signatories to the Eldoret Declaration (S/2002/1359, annex) and political leaders at the Conference, in consultation with traditional leaders within their respective clan structures, would select the members of Parliament. In addition, the transitional federal government would immediately initiate a dialogue on national unity with "Somaliland". The 5 July agreement was put before the plenary and adopted by acclamation.

7. The President of the Transitional National Government, Abdikassim Salad Hassan, criticized the 5 July agreement, claiming that it would divide the country because it would implicitly recognize "Somaliland". He said that his Government would not be party to such a process. He also disowned the signatures of the Prime Minister of the Transitional National Government and Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, whom he had designated as leaders of the delegation of the Transitional National Government to the Conference. He argued that they had acted contrary to the official position of his Government, which had been formally submitted to Mr. Kiplagat. He also contended that only traditional elders should select the members of Parliament, since it had been agreed that clans would be the basis for representation. He objected strongly that Arabic had been placed with English as one of the two second official languages, instead of being placed on the same level as Somali as one of the two first official languages of the country.

8. Other Somali leaders also denounced the 5 July agreement. Among them were Musse Sudi ("Yallahow") and Colonel Barre Aden Shire of the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA). They stated that the agreement had been signed in the absence of some important leaders, such as themselves, and therefore could not be binding. They subsequently declared that they had withdrawn from the Conference.

9. The 5 July agreement sharpened the differences between Mr. Hassan on the one hand and his Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly on the other. Mr. Hassan suspended his participation in the Conference and returned to Mogadishu on 30 July. A session of the Transitional National Assembly was convened in Mogadishu on 9 August, with 124 out of 245 members in attendance, and it voted for the removal of the Prime Minister and the Speaker.

10. Discussions on four different versions of the draft charter continued from 5 July until 15 September, and the IGAD Technical Committee, with the support of international observers, strived to address the concerns raised by some Somali leaders. The fourth version of the draft charter was circulated on 19 July by Mr. Kiplagat. It raised the status of the Arabic language and affirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia. A fifth version of the draft charter circulated on 1 August removed the call on the future transitional federal government to enter into immediate negotiations with "Somaliland".

11. The fifth version of the draft charter was debated in the plenary, article by article, by those who continued to attend the Conference until mid-August. Mr. Kiplagat commissioned a group of Somali lawyers, who were also members of the plenary, to rearrange the text of the draft charter, taking into account the issues debated in the plenary. A Kenyan constitutional expert chaired the work of the group and prepared the sixth and seventh versions of the draft charter. However, differences remained on both the content and the modalities for the implementation of federalism during the transitional period.

12. Members of the Technical Committee, Kenyan officials, my Representative and international observers made several efforts to persuade Mr. Hassan and other Somali leaders to return to Mbagathi. However, at a press conference on 9 September, Mr. Hassan, Mr. Sudi ("Yallahow"), Osman Hassan Ali ("Atto"), Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade of the Rahenwien Resistance Army (RRA) and Colonel Shire (JVA), who had been meeting in Mogadishu, expressed dissatisfaction with the proceedings at the Conference and stated that in order to restore "Somali ownership" of the process, the chairmanship of the Conference should be transferred to a Somali citizen. They were of the view that the drafting of the charter should be done anew by the Somalis themselves, possibly assisted by foreign experts, and that reconciliation among the Somali clans that had experienced a setback as a result of the Conference should be realized before any genuine peace process could take place.

13. In the meantime, it was reported that on 13 September Somali leaders at the Conference had reached an accord on how to address the issue of the component units of the Somali Republic in the draft charter, according to which the Somali Republic would comprise the transitional federal government, state governments, regional administrations and district administrations.

14. On 14 September, Mr. Hassan, Colonel Shire, Mr. Ali and representatives of Mr. Sudi and Mr. Habsade returned to Nairobi.

15. On the following day, Kenyan officials, including Mr. Kiplagat, met with Mr. Hassan and other leaders to invite them to a session of the plenary scheduled for that morning to discuss the draft charter. Upon the request of Mr. Hassan and other leaders, Kenyan officials announced that the plenary would be postponed for two to three days to allow the just returned leaders to study the draft charter. However, the Somali leaders who had reached the 13 September accord rejected any postponement of the plenary. The IGAD Technical Committee then presented a compromise in which the plenary would meet but adoption of the draft charter would wait until the group from Mogadishu was able to join. Rejecting the proposed compromise, those leaders adopted the draft charter on the same day under the chairmanship of Mr. Kiplagat, who announced that phase III of the Conference, to select members of Parliament, would begin the following day.

16. Mr. Hassan and those who had returned with him to Nairobi rejected the outcome. He declared that he and the other leaders had gone back to Nairobi in good faith, but had not been given an opportunity to express their views or even time to read the seventh version of the draft charter.

17. Meanwhile, international observers at the Conference, including my Representative, tried to find a middle ground between the 5 July agreement and the

decision taken at the Conference on 15 September, even as some 50 Somalis declared their candidacy for the presidency.

18. A high-level European Union delegation led by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Senator Alfredo Mantica, held talks in Nairobi from 17 to 19 September on regional issues, including the Conference. The delegation met with the international observers at the Conference and reiterated support for the Kenya-led IGAD process. It also met with Mr. Hassan and urged him to remain in Nairobi in view of the efforts of Kenyan officials to address his concerns. The Kenyan Foreign Minister also met with Mr. Hassan and urged him to remain in Nairobi. However, Mr. Hassan and some other leaders insisted that they would resume participation in the Conference only if the reported adoption of the draft charter were declared null and void, Somali ownership of the Conference were assured and international observers were actively engaged in the reconciliation process. On 20 September, notwithstanding the fact that many of the concerns raised by Mr. Hassan and other leaders regarding the 5 July agreement had been addressed, he and the leaders who had accompanied him back to Nairobi departed for Mogadishu, insisting that the Conference had collapsed and that they were going to open another reconciliation process inside Somalia.

19. The issue of "Somaliland" remains contentious as well. The "Somaliland" authorities have continued their refusal to attend the Conference and issued a statement on 21 July declaring that any claims or declarations of sovereignty over "Somaliland" by a future Somali Government would be viewed by "Somaliland" as an indication of hostile intent. "Somaliland's" President, Dahir Riyale Kahin, issued a statement on 3 August in which he refused to receive Kenya's newly appointed Ambassador to Somalia for discussions on the participation of "Somaliland" in the Conference.

20. During its second assembly, which was held in Maputo from 10 to 12 July, the African Union endorsed the Somali national reconciliation process and undertook to deploy a military observer mission to Somalia to monitor the cessation of hostilities as provided for in the Eldoret Declaration once a comprehensive agreement is reached. Subsequently, an African Union/IGAD reconnaissance mission visited Baidoa, Beledweyne, Boosaaso, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Luuq and Mogadishu from 21 to 31 July. The mission's objective was to engage in a dialogue to establish mechanisms to support the deployment of some 75 African Union monitors.

21. While the mission was well received in Garoowe and Boosaaso, a segment of the Habr-Gedir clan in Gaalkacyo demonstrated against its visit. The mission was prevented from entering Beledweyne, and in Mogadishu a bomb was thrown into the lobby of the hotel in which its members were staying. They also received anonymous messages to the effect that they were not welcome. The mission concluded that, given the prevailing political and military conditions in Somalia, more work needed to be done before military observers could be deployed. It emphasized that the Somali leaders it had consulted were ready to disarm but that for this to happen the assistance of the international community was essential.

III. Activities of the United Nations

22. My Representative and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia remained actively engaged in efforts to support the Somali national reconciliation

process and undertook frequent consultations with the Somali leaders at the Conference, as well as those in Somalia. My Special Adviser for Africa, Mohamed Sahnoun, also visited the Conference and attended several plenary sessions to encourage the Somali delegates to reach an inclusive and comprehensive agreement.

23. Ghanim Alnajjar, the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, visited Hargeysa, Boosaaso and Kismaayo from 26 to 30 August. On his return to Nairobi, he reiterated his concern regarding the appalling conditions prevalent in camps for internally displaced persons, especially their poor access to basic services including water, health, adequate sanitation and schools. He drew special attention to the plight of members of minority clans who suffered discrimination and were afforded little protection from their own clans or local authorities. He underlined that local authorities were responsible for the protection of human rights of all citizens in their area of control. Mr. Alnajjar also expressed serious concern over the imprisonment of juveniles with adults in many parts of Somalia. He did, however, note the reduction in armed conflict in "Puntland". He attended a plenary session of the Conference and stressed the importance of taking human rights into consideration in the drafting and subsequent implementation of the charter.

24. In addition to joining other members of the international community in facilitating dialogue at the Conference, the United Nations country team is putting in place an international support system to assist in the establishment of the future Government and Parliament in Somalia, as one among other quick-impact interventions. The country team has also established a working group aimed at developing a comprehensive peace-building plan to be implemented in the country once a comprehensive agreement is reached at the Conference.

25. My Representative for Somalia and the resident and humanitarian coordinator invited representatives of regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to commemorate the International Day of Peace, 21 September, in Somalia and in Nairobi. The activities were especially aimed at encouraging the youth of Somalia to reflect on a future peaceful society and creating public consciousness regarding the need to disarm the militias. In cooperation with United Nations staff, several private and public organizations commemorated the day in Beledweyne, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu, and as well as at the Conference in Mbagathi. Similar activities were organized at the Somali refugee camp in Daadab, Kenya. The contributions to the campaign by the football clubs of Barcelona and Real Madrid and the Barcelona city hall, as well as Somali business groups and NGOs and the University of Mogadishu, set a welcome precedent for future cooperation among such organizations in Somalia, the region and beyond.

26. In his mid-term briefing to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) on 13 August, the Chairman of the re-established Panel of Experts (see resolution 1474 (2003)) reported that the Panel had been focusing its work on recent violations of the arms embargo on Somalia by land, air and sea.

27. The third meeting of the Somalia Contact Group in New York was held on 15 September. My Representative for Somalia briefed members on the progress made and the challenges faced by the Somali leaders in reaching agreement on the draft charter.

IV. Developments inside Somalia

28. Mr. Hassan was reportedly given a rousing reception on his return to Mogadishu from Nairobi on 30 July. He declared that he did not intend to run for the presidency but that his Government would not step down when its mandate expired on 26 August, in view of a provision in the transitional national charter that referred to the 1960 Constitution of Somalia. According to his interpretation, it did not allow for a vacuum to exist in the structure of government. To avoid such a vacuum, he said, he would continue as president so long as the IGAD-led Somali national reconciliation process did not produce an all-inclusive and acceptable government for Somalia.

29. On 11 June, in "Somaliland", the Chairman of the Solidarity Party (Kulmiye), Ahmad Muhammed Silanyo, accepted Mr. Kahin of the Allied People's Democratic Party as "President" of "Somaliland", ending the controversy following the elections on the accuracy of the electoral figures (see S/2003/636, paras. 21-23).

30. During the third week of July, a "Somaliland" delegation led by Mr. Kahin visited Addis Ababa and met with Ethiopian authorities, including the President.

Security

31. On 5 July, the Government of Kenya lifted the ban on flights to and from Somalia that had been put in place on 21 June due to Kenyan concerns over possible terrorist-related activities.

32. Security in the southern parts of Somalia, including Mogadishu, remains precarious. Mounting criminality in Mogadishu includes frequent abductions, carjackings and civilian deaths. An Italian national was held hostage in Mogadishu from 17 to 28 June and then released. On 2 July, Dr. Hussein Muhammad Nur, a brother of RRA leader Colonel Hassan Mohamed Nur ("Shatigadud"), was murdered. On 6 July, hundreds of medical workers in Mogadishu held a one-day work stoppage in protest of the killing. Moreover, fighting between the militias of Omar Mahmud Mohamed ("Finish") and Mr. Sudi ("Yallahow") continued in the Medina district, causing several civilian deaths. Incidents of violence, including the rape of children and the dismemberment of a young woman in August, have shocked even the hardened citizens of the city. During August, some efforts were made to establish neighbourhood security patrols. In at least one case, neighbouring security organizations fought over their boundaries. It is too early, however, to judge the impact of the patrols.

33. Tensions between Mr. Sudi and Mohammed Dhere, two Hawiye/Abgaal leaders, led to fierce clashes around Jawhar in July, although calm had been restored by early September. Some 50 people were reported killed in July around South Mudug, when Habr Gedir and Dir militias clashed over control of water.

34. Inter-clan fighting around Baidoa also continued. The confrontation, which is in part a leadership dispute within RRA, has prevented access to the town for 14 months and has claimed numerous lives. The protagonists regularly use landmines. The ferocity of the conflict is illustrated by episodes such as the killing of a young woman by one side on 18 June, which was followed by a series of revenge killings in which at least four young women were reported killed.

35. In the Gedo and Lower Shabbelle regions there is hardly any established authority. As a result, armed groups are able to set up checkpoints to extort money from travellers. The lack of local authority has significantly reduced the frequency of visits by aid workers to places such as Belet Hawa, Luuq and Bardera. On 23 July, in Bardera, a gunman fired on a United Nations aircraft. The airstrip is closed to United Nations operations until adequate security arrangements are in place. On 14 September, a Kenyan national working for the Adventist Development Relief Agency was murdered in the El-Wak district in the Gedo region. The number of checkpoints on the Mogadishu-Kismaayo road increased significantly during August. Militias loyal to JVA in Kismaayo, local businessmen and the leader of the Islamic court from Qoryooley in Lower Shabbelle cleared some of them in late August.

36. Insecurity continues to affect humanitarian operations south of Gaalkacyo. Clan conflict, banditry and the weakness of most local administrations combine to make the management of security a significant challenge for humanitarian staff. Groups of armed men harass travellers and transporters without fear of retribution and make many areas almost inaccessible to United Nations staff.

37. On 21 July, in Garoowe, there was shooting near the residence of the "Vice-President". The incident appeared to be related to a power struggle over proposed changes in the "Puntland" cabinet.

38. A riot took place in Burco, "Somaliland", on 1 September. The incident occurred when the police tried to move a number of internally displaced persons from the secondary school to a new site in the town. The move had apparently been agreed to, and the reason for the clash is not yet clear. One internally displaced person was killed and a police officer was injured. The school, the only secondary school in the region, was badly damaged by fire during the incident.

Humanitarian situation

39. Violence and armed conflict in some areas of Somalia continued to jeopardize the ability of Somalis, already dismally deprived of access to sufficient food, safe drinking water, health and education services and employment, to build and sustain their livelihoods, exercise their human rights and live with dignity.

40. Armed conflict and criminality in Mogadishu also continue to restrict humanitarian access. Nonetheless, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies continue minimal operations, primarily in the health and education sectors.

41. Insecurity, banditry and the use of landmines in and around Baidoa have continued to displace civilians, affect farming activities and restrict humanitarian access, allowing only minimal alleviation of a worsening humanitarian situation. Health centres, including the only public hospital in town as well as private clinics, have been functioning only intermittently since fighting broke out in June 2002. Food remains scarce, as poor rains and crop infestation have led to less than expected food production in most areas of the Bay region, including Baidoa. Meanwhile, wells have not been chlorinated, contributing to poor sanitation and exacerbating vulnerability to illnesses such as malaria, diarrhoea and tuberculosis. Although the parties to the conflict have, under pressure from community leaders

and local businessmen, sought to resolve their differences and made commitments to improve the environment for aid workers and beneficiaries, the results have yet to be translated into improvements on the ground.

42. Due to insecurity in the Gedo region, United Nations agencies and NGOs have continued to call upon local faction leaders to ensure the safety of civilians and aid workers. Although some leaders seem eager to make improvements in this regard, there has been no major change in the situation. In addition to generalized insecurity, the absence of some leaders owing to their participation in the Conference has also created an environment of impunity in which human rights violations are widespread.

43. "Puntland" authorities have formally agreed that humanitarian aid workers may access vulnerable communities in the Sool and Sanaag regions. The contested status of those regions, which "Somaliland" and "Puntland" both claim them as theirs, had for years made them inhospitable to aid interventions. In part because of this step forward, the resident and humanitarian coordinator was able to undertake an assessment of some parts of those areas in August, in particular the Sool Plateau, where pastoralists and their livestock may be facing a humanitarian crisis due to recurrent drought.

44. In "Somaliland", pasture land has regenerated following its depletion earlier this year after an unusually large influx of Ethiopian pastoralists. There are indications, however, that another influx may be imminent due to the deterioration of the conditions for livestock in the Shinnele area of Ethiopia. United Nations agencies and their partners continue to monitor the situation.

45. During the period under review, United Nations agencies and NGOs completed a pilot strategy for addressing both the protection and livelihood needs of vulnerable groups in Kismaayo. The ultimate aim is to replicate this approach throughout Somalia as a means of strengthening common integrated assessment and programme implementation.

46. The preliminary results of the annual main *gu* harvest assessment indicate that the final harvest for 2003 will be slightly higher than in 2002 and 28 per cent above the post-war average. However, in some areas, such as the Hiiraan and Middle Juba regions, production is expected to be well below average, while pastoralists in many parts of the country continue to struggle with chronic food deficits.

47. As a result of the combination of food insecurity and poor health conditions, Somalis continue to suffer from high malnutrition. The global malnutrition rate for children under five, as reported by the United Nations Children's Fund, is 17 per cent. Malnutrition rates in areas surveyed have varied from 8.3 per cent in Gaalkacyo, "Puntland", to 21.5 per cent in Belet Hawa, Gedo region.

48. In November, the country team and a number of NGOs will issue a consolidated inter-agency appeal for Somalia for 2004. At present, programmes in the 2003 appeal are 39 per cent funded.

V. Operational activities in support of peace

Protection and human rights

49. United Nations agencies are helping authorities in Somalia to improve the administration of justice by developing the rule of law, building their capacity to enforce the law and improving the application of human rights standards. Until recently, such programmes were being implemented in the relatively peaceful area in the north-west of the country, mainly in "Somaliland". United Nations agencies are planning to extend such programmes to less stable regions in the north-east, centre and south of Somalia.

50. Working closely with authorities in "Somaliland", United Nations agencies finalized a curriculum and identified trainees and trainers for a series of legal training programmes involving over 200 legal professionals and administrators. A three-month training session for 50 legal professionals began in August. Following extensive consultation with key stakeholders, facilitated by United Nations agencies, a draft statute to establish a human rights commission has been submitted to the Minister of Justice in "Somaliland". Support is also ongoing for the establishment of an office of the ombudsman, which will be important in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable, including women, children and displaced persons.

51. United Nations agencies have also assisted "Somaliland" authorities to establish a bar association with a governing structure and a set of ethical rules and regulations. A bill encapsulating the rules and regulations is currently being considered by the "Somaliland" Parliament. The United Nations is also providing technical advice to the newly established Law Reform Commission of "Somaliland" to develop a comprehensive work plan.

52. During the last four months, an "access to justice" initiative was launched to establish legal aid clinics at Hargeysa University, serviced by law students, legal professionals and members of the NGO community. The initiative also serves as a forum for providing legal advice, developing advocacy campaigns and policy analysis.

53. An assessment of the rehabilitation needs of court buildings, which began with the Supreme Court building in Hargeysa, has now been extended to other court and prison facilities and police stations in the region. Following the rehabilitation of the Mandera Police Academy with United Nations assistance, a six-month training programme began in June for over 200 trainees selected by the "Somaliland" authorities, including 30 female recruits. In addition, in-service training for the police in the areas of crowd control, armed conflict resolution, station management and human rights is being provided.

54. United Nations agencies are providing technical advice to the "Somaliland" Task Force on Small Arms Control in assessing the existing regulatory framework and drafting new laws that are consistent with international standards. They are also providing assistance for the renovation of five police station armouries and training on small arms control.

55. The current United Nations mine action programme focuses on building capacity of the "Somaliland" Mine Action Centre. The construction of a dedicated unexploded ordnance and ammunition bunker was completed in June, and during the

reporting period 6,000 items of unexploded ordnance have been cleared. Similar initiatives are planned in the north-east of Somalia.

Children's rights

56. The results of a recently completed child protection study, conducted throughout Somalia, are providing a sound baseline for planning and implementing programmatic and advocacy interventions on behalf of children. Priority issues to be addressed are the high prevalence of sexual violence, in particular among displaced children, children engaged in exploitative and hazardous labour, including those working and living on the streets, discrimination against children belonging to minority clans and the protection of children with disabilities and their access to opportunities.

57. In "Somaliland", 45 judicial officials, including judges, prosecutors, assessors, lawyers and notaries, received training on juvenile justice, child rights and child protection issues and were provided with a juvenile justice resource pack for reference and application. "Somaliland" police officers were also given briefings to ensure respect of child rights and their protection by law enforcement officials.

58. A juvenile justice and child protection framework for "Somaliland" has been adopted, together with the establishment of a strong partnership with local authorities as well as civil society stakeholders. Similarly, a workshop conducted in "Puntland" has provided stakeholders from all branches of local government and civil society with the opportunity to identify measures for the improvement of the child protection and juvenile justice system.

Protection of women's rights

59. Technically, Somalia follows three systems of laws: secular law, Shariah and customary law. Although these three systems coexist, there is a lack of harmonization in the way they address crimes and other legal issues. The ability of Somali women to claim and defend their rights is affected by their social status and the prevailing legal environment, which consists mainly of a combination of Shariah and customary law and is applied differently in each region.

60. During the reporting period, United Nations agencies and their partners completed assessments of the judiciary system and collated recommendations on possible ways to improve the justice situation in Somalia as it affects women. Projects are under way to develop training manuals, advocacy tools and legal training toolkits to be used in the training of law enforcement and judicial personnel on gender issues within the three systems of law.

61. Training is being provided to women's organizations for the formation of a women's national human rights advocacy network, the development of advocacy tools and training manuals in both English and Somali, the integration of gender and human rights issues into existing legal systems, and the inclusion of a bill of rights in the future federal and regional charters.

Repatriation of refugees

62. Since the beginning of 2003, 5,569 people have been voluntarily repatriated to "Somaliland" and "Puntland" from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. UNHCR and other agencies are working closely with the recently established Refugee Eligibility Committee in "Somaliland" in assuring protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees residing in Hargeysa. In September, United Nations agencies sponsored a one-day round table in Addis Ababa on reintegration and internally displaced persons in Somaliland that was jointly hosted with the "Somaliland" authorities, donors and host asylum countries (Djibouti and Ethiopia).

Provision of basic services

63. The joint United Nations reintegration programme in north-west Somalia has provided new classrooms and furniture for 16 primary and secondary schools, benefiting 6,000 schoolchildren. The labour-intensive rehabilitation of the road from Zeila to Tokoshi and the Salahley road in Somaliland has greatly benefited the people in the area. Some 20 dams and shallow wells have also been rehabilitated, providing access to clean water for some 10,000 people, mainly in the rural areas. The reconstruction and rehabilitation of seven primary schools for more than 3,000 schoolchildren, as well as the rehabilitation of Jariban Hospital and Gaarad Clinic, which provide health services to 20,000 people, are close to completion. Since the completion of a water system project in Gaalkacyo, 60,000 people now have access to water in this area of "Puntland". The water system, with a pipeline network of more than 21 kilometres and water pumped from new bore wells distributed through a 750,000-litre elevated water storage tank, will be managed by the Gaalkacyo Water Company.

Livelihoods

64. In addition to the low-income countries under stress initiative, the World Bank and the European Commission are funding the development of a Somali livestock sector strategy. United Nations consultants have completed their analyses of the sector and potential problems, and an initial strategy has been outlined for further discussion and development in the coming months.

65. Since the April meeting between representatives from the Somali business community, the Transitional National Government, officials from "Puntland" and "Somaliland" and Middle Eastern importing countries (S/2003/636, para. 49), discussions have been taking place with the relevant authorities to establish a Somali livestock board in Mogadishu, Garoowe and Hargeysa. The Transitional National Government and "Puntland" authorities fully endorsed the formation of such a board and are preparing the necessary legislation, while the "Somaliland" authorities have chosen to proceed with a separate board.

66. United Nations agencies continue to make concerted efforts to improve the standards, procedures and international acceptance of the Somali remittance industry. During the reporting period, a two-day workshop was held in Dubai for remittance companies and the Somali business community on the possible expansion of financial services in Somalia, and the first part of a feasibility study has been

completed on the subject. Planning is currently under way for a workshop in London, which will be aimed at improving compliance with host-country rules and international financial regulations.

HIV/AIDS prevention

67. During the period under review, the strategic framework for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections within Somali populations was finalized. The framework provides a comprehensive foundation on which to build interventions throughout the country.

68. With the current low prevalence rates, one of the priorities for HIV prevention and control is to build the capacity of communities to develop an integrated and effective response to HIV/AIDS. Peer counselling has been identified as one of the important strategies in that regard. Two counsellors participated in a youth peer counsellors' workshop in Lusaka from 14 to 24 July, and a similar workshop is planned in Somalia in December. Training workshops combining advocacy, mobilization and counselling skills targeting religious leaders and community activists are also planned for the fourth quarter of 2003 with the aim of supporting a cadre of individuals to mobilize communities and act as resource and support persons.

VI. Observations

69. The Somali national reconciliation process under the auspices of IGAD has devoted almost a year of sustained effort to trying to arrive at a durable and inclusive solution to the conflict in Somalia. The Kenyan Government is to be commended for providing the venue and acting as the lead mediator for the Somali National Reconciliation Conference in Mbagathi, as well as for the timely interventions undertaken by senior government officials to keep the reconciliation process on track. The international community, represented by special envoys and diplomatic missions, has joined efforts with my Representative and those of regional organizations to support efforts to reach an inclusive agreement in Mgabathi. I would like once again to commend the generous financial contributions of the European Union to the Conference.

70. Notwithstanding the progress made at the Mgabathi Conference in approving the reports of the five reconciliation committees (see para. 3 above), further advances have been slow owing to differences on the issue of federalism and on the relationship of the future transitional government with existing regional and local authorities, in particular "Somaliland". The situation has been complicated by the expiration on 26 August 2003 of the mandate of the Transitional National Government deriving from the agreement reached in August 2000 at the Somali National Peace Conference held at Arta, Djibouti.

71. Somali leaders face the historical challenge of bridging their differences in order to reach agreement on a viable government. I urge them to continue their dialogue to ensure an inclusive solution that they can all support and implement in good faith. I do so in the full understanding that considerable political courage will

be required of the Somali political leaders and elders if there is to be such an outcome.

72. At this critical juncture in the reconciliation process, the sustained commitment of the IGAD frontline States, in particular, remains vital for the success of the Conference. An indication of such a commitment from the region would send an unequivocal message to the Somali leaders regarding their own responsibility, as well as to the international community at large. Key Member States, from the region as well as outside it, should monitor and support the efforts of Somali leaders and the IGAD Technical Committee in helping to ensure that the Mbagathi Conference culminates in an inclusive and comprehensive agreement. In this context, I welcome the African Union's commitment (see paras. 20-21 above) as a serious contribution to peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

73. Conflict and violence within Somalia, including brutality against civilians, continue to be a source of suffering for the population and a hindrance to humanitarian activities. I urge all Somali leaders to do their utmost to restrain their militias and supporters to ensure the safety and well-being of their fellow Somalis. At the same time, I would like to welcome the efforts of those authorities who have sought to foster security in their region and have taken steps to engage with the humanitarian community in order to create conditions conducive to the protection and security of civilians as well as safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian workers to all parts of the country.

74. The international community is becoming increasingly impatient with the continued conflict and violence in Somalia. As is clear from the present report, the activities of United Nations agencies and their partners have been curtailed due to the insecurity prevailing in many parts of the country. Organizations and individuals devoted to humanitarian and development work in Somalia are calling upon the international community to hold the Somali leaders accountable for the welfare of their people and for the legitimacy of the leaders to be judged accordingly. In this context, I welcome the decision of the Security Council committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) to visit the region in the coming weeks to strengthen the arms embargo.

75. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the United Nations country team are, as indicated above, actively developing a peace-building plan to be implemented in Somalia once a definitive agreement is reached at the Conference. It is my hope that such an agreement, together with the amelioration of the security situation, will soon create conditions conducive to fully utilizing the contributions made to the United Nations Trust Fund for Peace-building in Somalia. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon donors to contribute generously to the consolidated inter-agency appeal for Somalia and to do so without delay so as to allow the effective implementation of a full, coherent and balanced humanitarian and peace-building programme.

76. As members of the Security Council are aware, since its establishment in April 1995 the United Nations Political Office for Somalia has been assisting in my efforts to advance the cause of peace and reconciliation in Somalia through its contacts with Somali leaders, civic organizations and the States and organizations concerned. Since 2002, my Representative and the staff of the Political Office have been actively engaged in efforts to support the Conference. Pending an agreement at the Conference and improvement of the security situation that would allow me to submit

a proposal on the establishment of a peace-building office in Somalia and adjustments that may be needed to the mandate of the Political Office, it is my intention to continue the activities of the Office for the biennium 2004-2005 at the current resource level.

77. Finally, I wish to thank my Representative, Winston Tubman, the staff of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the country team and many non-governmental organizations for their efforts in support of national reconciliation and peace in Somalia, as well as for their dedication in responding to the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the country.